Restoration of flights to Tanjore, Tamil Nadu

*326. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that airlink to Tanjore is not operational;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the number of tourists visiting this area of Tamil Nadu is on the rise;

(d) if so, the steps being taken to restore the flights to Tanjore; and

(e) by when it will be operational?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (e) Tanjore Airport belongs to Ministry of Defence and at present no civil flights are operating through this airport.

Vayudoot Ltd. operated DO228 aircraft to Tanjore during the period January, 1987 to September, 1989. Tanjore Airport was, however, handed over by Ministry of Civil Aviation to Ministry of Defence (IAF) on 20th September, 1989. Airports Authority of India (AAI) has retained only 26.50 acres of land and transferred the remaining land area measuring 448.69 acres to Indian Air Force (IAF). AAI has not constructed any civil enclave consisting of Passenger Terminal Building, Apron and Link Taxiway for handling of civil flights. Though, the number of tourists visiting Tamil Nadu is on the rise, no scheduled airline operator has evinced interest to operate to/from Tanjore. Therefore, AAI has no plans to develop any civil enclave or other infrastructure at Tanjore.

Tanjore is only 55 km. from Trichy Airport, Indian Airlines provides the following regular services to/from Trichy:—

Chennai-Trichy-Calicut-Fujairah-Kuwait & RT	A-320 once weekly
Chennai-Trichy-Calicut-Rasalkhaimah-Kuwait & RT	A-320 once weekly
Chennai-Trichy-Trivandrum-Sharjah & RT	A-320 four time weekly